



Department of Justice

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Southern District of Texas

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LAREDO TRUCK DRIVER SENTENCED TO PRISON FOR DISTRIBUTING CHILD PORNOGRAPHY

(LAREDO, TX)– Abel C. Lucio, 55, has been sentenced to almost eight years in federal prison without parole and ordered to register as a sex offender for distributing child pornography, United States Attorney Don DeGabrielle, Jr., announced today.

United States District Judge Micaela Alvarez sentenced Lucio to a 95 month term of imprisonment to be followed by a three year term of supervised release during which Lucio has been ordered to register as a sex offender, participate in a sex offender/mental health program, avoid direct and indirect contact with minors, and not to possess or have access to computer or the internet except for specific specified purposes.

Lucio's conviction is the result of an investigation initiated by the Federal Bureau of Investigation (FBI) in 2002. The FBI later obtained additional information from state investigations in Maryland and in Texas involving the same person distributing child pornography via the Internet using the screen names ACHot4UNTX, Achot4u, and tabatha598. The FBI's investigation focused upon identifying and locating the person behind the screen names.

The person using the screen name Achot4u was responsible for sending five images of child pornography to an adult female in a computer "chat room" in April 2002. Several months later, in August 2002, the person using the screen name ACHot4UNTX entered a chat room, began talking with an undercover Maryland police officer posing as a thirteen-year-old girl, and ultimately sent three child pornographic images to the undercover officer believing he had sent them to the thirteen-year-old girl. The images depicted adult males performing sexual acts on children ranging in age from an estimated four years to seventeen years. The young girls depicted in two of the distributed images distributed were later identified by the National Center for Missing and Exploited Children as known sexually exploited child victims.

On June 5, 2006, the FBI's investigation identified the man behind the screen names and responsible for distributing the child pornography via the Internet as Abel C. Lucio, a commercial truck driver from Laredo, Texas. Lucio subsequently admitted to sending all eight images in 2002 using his personal laptop computer. Additional forensic examination of the computer recovered three suspected child pornographic images in allocated areas of the hard

drives, and fifteen suspected child pornographic images in the unallocated areas of the hard drives. Lucio was convicted after pleading guilty to the federal offense on August 7, 2006.

Lucio, who has been in federal custody since his arrest in August 2006, and will remain in federal custody to begin serving his prison term.

This case is being brought as part of Project Safe Childhood, a nationwide initiative designed to protect children from online exploitation and abuse launched in February 2006 by Attorney General Alberto R. Gonzales. Led by the United States Attorneys Offices, Project Safe Childhood marshals federal, state and local resources to better locate, apprehend, and prosecute individuals who exploit children via the Internet, as well as identify and rescue victims. For more information about Project Safe Childhood, please visit www.projectsafechildhood.gov/.

This case was investigated by the Federal Bureau of Investigation, the Criminal Investigations Division of the Texas Attorney General, the Maryland State Police's Internet Crimes Against Children Task Force, the Carroll County Sheriff's Office, and was prosecuted by Assistant United States Attorney Diana Song.

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